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Capitol Views

BY WILLARD EDWARDS
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—The speech that was never delivered on the Senate floor this week, altho a number of members had to fight back the impulse to speak, would have gone something like this:

"Mr. President, let us have done with all this secrecy and double-talk! Let us bring into the open what all of us know, or should know, but are restricted from saying publicly.



Edwards

"We are talking here about the central intelligence agency which operates in the dim underworld of international espionage. Espionage is a dirty business. A nation may not survive in this sordid world without stooping to it, but let us not drop a glamorous cloak over its essentially dishonorable nature. It is based on deception and fraud, on trickery, and false pretense. It is most successful when it is most treacherous.

"If the CIA is to cope with the communist enemy in the jungles of foreign cities, it must sometimes employ agents as morally corrupt, as vicious and cruel, and perverse as their opponents. It may come as a shock to the American taxpayer that his hard-earned dollars go into the pockets of homosexuals, sex deviates, pimps, and criminals—operating as employees of the United States government, but why keep the knowledge from him? We all know it and accept it as necessary. Why shouldn't he know?"

Stennis Pleads for Executive Session

THERE WERE MOMENTS during last Wednesday's debate when such words seemed about to be spoken. Sen. John Stennis [D., Miss.] pleaded for an executive session at which, with press and public barred and the doors locked, he could talk freely. He contented himself with hinting that the CIA was forced to employ for some missions "persons not of the very top quality and not the very finest characters."

Sen. Birch Bayh [D., Ind.] was similarly guarded. An American spy, he remarked, was not always "a college honor graduate," and there were occasions when American intelligence agencies had no alternative but to use unscrupulous methods. In general, however, a gentlemanly reticence about CIA practices prevailed.

The bill under consideration, drafted by Sen. Sam. J. Ervin Jr. [D., N. C.], commanded almost unanimous approval and was

eventually passed, 79 to 4. It is designed to stem the tide of "big brotherism" in the government by prohibiting the use of lie detectors, psychological tests, and probing of the religious beliefs and sex habits of 3 million federal employees. Two years of hearings had revealed the existence of a bureaucratic army of snoopers, intent upon prying into the most intimate details of the lives of any person, male or female, seeking a place on the government payroll or already on it.

The measure granted a partial exemption to the CIA and the national security agency, permitting them to use psychological and polygraph testing if they found it essential to national security.

Launches Lobbying Campaign

BUT THE CIA WANTED a total exemption from any restrictions on exploring the background of potential agents. It showed its power two weeks ago by persuading Sen. Mike Mansfield [D., Mont.], the majority leader, to withdraw the bill from consideration temporarily. Then it launched an intensive lobbying campaign.

The hidden reason for the agency's opposition finally became clear. It wanted complete freedom with scientific testing devices not only to "screen out" the morally undesirable but to "screen in" a certain number for employment. A secret agent's efficiency was not necessarily hampered, and might even be augmented, if he was a depraved character devoid of honor or scruples. The homosexual, the drug addict, the thief could make contacts in the vice circles of London or Paris or other world capitals not open to normal men. Some would become "double agents," working for both sides but presumably giving a higher loyalty to the United States because its pay scale for spies is much higher.

The CIA won its battle, securing virtual exemption from the bill before it was passed. Some senators mourned the passing of an era when an American secret agent would always be esteemed as a courageous patriot, risking torture, imprisonment, and death for love of country. Now, in an evil world, contending with evil forces, the nation must sometimes employ evil men.

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